

Public Abstract

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Title:Castor oil and orange juice: How John H. Johnson fed news to Black America

In the mid-1940s, publisher John H. Johnson did not like the image of African Americans that was projected by mainstream, white-owned media. He felt the image constructed was too limited and stereotypical. He also felt that the news in those publications regarding African Americans was too negative. He created Ebony magazine in 1945 to bring uplifting news to African Americans and to construct a more accurate image of that community. As a businessman, Johnson wanted to be successful in his venture and felt that his magazine would sell better with soft news covers, playing the harder news stories inside the magazine. The results of this study indicate that Johnson succeeded in constructing a broader image of African Americans by publishing stories about African Americans in all walks of life, all across the country. Ebony magazine's journalistic style was indeed uplifting, but sacrificed some of the serious political and social commentary news in order to maintain that perspective.